

*tā ō visp* “always until all”, even though his comments (pp. 118–21) make it clear that the expression means “until the end of this existence”.

The text is followed by an extensive set of comments in which Zeini brings together all available material to deepen our understanding of the PYH. He uses a methodical step-by-step analysis of how words are used in the broader Pahlavi literature to grasp how for example key concepts such as *ahlāyīh* “righteousness” and *frārōnīh* “goodness” relate to each other in the scholarly exegesis of the text. He clarifies the relevance of terms like *bar ud bun* “yield and capital” in a liturgical text. This section touches on many areas and should inspire much further discussion.

This work represents a big step forward in the study of the Pahlavi versions of the Avesta and will hopefully lead to an increased appreciation of these difficult texts. Zeini has presented a plausible method for studying them that can unlock the store of information which they contain concerning the beliefs and situation of the Zoroastrians after the fall of the Sasanian Empire in 651 CE. Even with the large amount of material presented in this work the PYH still has more to give and Zeini has done an admirable job of making the text accessible to broader circles of research.

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## SOUTH ASIA

PATRICK OLIVELLE (ed. and trans.):

*Yājñavalkya: A Treatise on Dharma.*

(Murty Classical Library of India, 20.) xl, 384 pp. Cambridge, MA:

Harvard University Press, 2019. £23.95. ISBN 978 0 67427706 9.

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The *Yājñavalkya Dharmaśāstra* or *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* (*YDh*) is second in fame only to the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra* or *Manu Smṛti* (*MDh*, c. 150 CE) as a classical authority on Brahmanical Hindu law. Indeed, the *Mitākṣarā* commentary on *YDh* by Vijñāneśvara, a minister of the Cālukya king Vikramāditya VI (1076–1126), carried such weight in later centuries that the *YDh* may have exercised more influence on medieval scholastic Dharmaśāstra jurisprudence than far-famed Manu. The *YDh*, like the *MDh*, is a metrical work, composed in part of older verse maxims, redacted by an anonymous author, and ascribed to a legendary sage. Yājñavalkya is otherwise remembered by tradition as the original teacher and star philosopher of the Śukla Yajurveda, featured in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, and as an exponent of yoga.

This beautifully produced volume contains the Sanskrit text in Devanāgarī print with a new translation on facing pages. As explained in a “Note on the text” (pp. xxxix–xl), the text provided is the one constituted in a new critical edition by Olivelle. Due to the limitations of the general editorial policy of the Murty series, we are in the odd position of being given the critically edited text shorn of its critical apparatus: the full critical edition has been published separately (*Yājñavalkya Dharmaśāstra: The Textual History of a Hindu Legal Code*, Delhi: Primus Books, 2020). In lieu of the full apparatus, however, Olivelle includes “Notes to the text” at the end of the book (pp. 305–14), which include all significant deviations from “the Vulgate” text (the version represented in earlier editions and

reflected in Vijñāneśvara's *Mitākṣarā*), and mention parallels in other texts. This is followed by "Notes to the translation" (pp. 315–60), a glossary, a bibliography, a concordance of verse numbers across various editions of the text, and an index.

Olivelle begins by introducing the work and its history (pp. vii–xxxvii): "As a legal text, Yājñavalkya's work is far superior to Manu's in terms of precision and organizational skill" (p. viii). The ascription of the work to Yājñavalkya is consistent with its thoroughgoing alignment with the Śukla Yajurvedic canon, including mantras, ritual prescriptions, and allusions to narrative tropes from the works of that tradition. Olivelle hypothesizes that the decision to ascribe the work to Yājñavalkya, whom *YDh* 1.2 locates in Mithilā, the capital of Videha, may have been intended to flatter the Gupta imperial power in nearby Magadha, during a period, moreover, when yoga teachings were in vogue: "composed during the Gupta period, perhaps under imperial patronage, to support Gupta legitimacy" through an association with a regional hero, King Janaka of Videha "celebrated both in the Vedas and in the Sanskrit epics" (p. xii).

Olivelle also notes the *YDh*'s more developed "technical legal vocabulary", which would be expected in "a period of bureaucratic complexity when literacy, at least among the elite, was on the ascendancy" (p. xiii). Symptoms of the latter factor are the first appearance in a dharma text of the word *lekhyā* for "document", the expectation that contracts will be recorded in documents, and the first mention of the professional scribe, the *kāyastha*, whom the text at one point treats as a potential nuisance to the king's subjects (*YDh* 1.332). *YDh* (2.98–117) is also the first law book to use the technical term *divya* as the general term for a forensic ordeal.

Other notable innovations of the *YDh* are that it has moved the topic of cleansing birth and death impurity, as well as the discussion of ascetic modes of life, into the chapter dealing with expiation (*prāyaścitta*), a term originally designating acts intended to correct errors in ritual practice, then extended to cover penances for sin and impurity (as in *MDh*), and here further understood as including supererogatory austerities performed for spiritual benefit as well – complete with references to yoga (e.g. 3.110).

In the course of preparing the edition, Olivelle found that the manuscripts fell neatly into two distinct recensions, each lacking major variants: more than 30 manuscripts in a variety of scripts, and seven in Malayalam script. Though reliance on a stemma to constitute the text looked infeasible, consideration of external textual evidence brought him to an unexpected conclusion: that the version that has become standard (the "Vulgate") because of the fame and wide influence of the early twelfth-century commentary by Vijñāneśvara, substantially diverges from what he concludes must be an older, more original recension. Between the early fifth century CE (the likely time of the *YDh*'s composition) and the early ninth century (the date of the first surviving commentary, by Viśvarūpa) is what Olivelle calls a "dark period in the textual history of the work" (p. xxix). The readings of the latter commentary, however, turned out regularly to reflect readings closer to those of Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* and the *MDh*, which were major sources for the *YDh*; the testimony of two c. tenth-century *purāṇas* (the *Agnipurāṇa* and the *Garuḍapurāṇa*) also provides further external criteria in support of the Malayalam tradition's readings, many of which have also been preserved in testimonia and in another twelfth-century commentary by Aparārka.

Perhaps some irascible forest ascetic once pronounced a curse that otherwise beautiful facing-page edition-translations of Indian texts brought out in emulation of the Loeb Classical Series must always be disfigured by a maverick scheme of transliteration. The now-defunct Clay series suffered from a severe case. The Murty series is afflicted only with a minor blemish: names printed in Roman are

stripped of their diacritical marks, and supplied with aitches beside *s* and *c* as needed, while the surrounding terms in italics bear the standard diacritics. The resulting disparity is a little strange. (In the table of abbreviations (p. 303), a single “*p*” has been smuggled in by devious Kauṭilya.) A more serious formatting complaint is that in the long endnote sections, the running header does not indicate the corresponding pages of text to which the notes below refer, or even the chapter number. This makes navigating more cumbersome than necessary, since one must flip back and forth trying to determine whether one is looking at note 27 to Adhyāya 1, 2, or 3.

Apart from these minor quibbles, however, this book is elegantly written and laid out, and constitutes a major advance in knowledge of the history of this landmark religious lawbook and its place in the Dharmaśāstra canon.

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HARTMUT BUESCHER:

*Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts: The Paṇḍit Collection.*

(Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, Xylographs, etc. in Danish

Collections, vol 7.2.) xl (Vol 1), xxiii (Vol 2), 805 pp. Copenhagen:

NIAS Press, 2019. £200. ISBN 978 87 7694 255 7.

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This impressive work is a catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts from the “Paṇḍit” Collection in Copenhagen’s Danish Royal Library. As the name suggests, this collection of manuscripts was purchased from an anonymous Pune-based scholar early in the 1920s by Poul Tuxen, a Danish philologist and then librarian with the Danish Royal Library. As such, the collection holds immense interest as a snapshot of a private manuscript collection in early twentieth-century Maharashtra.

Buescher’s monumental efforts in making these manuscripts more available are evident on every page of these volumes, and will deserve praise and gratitude for decades to come. Manuscript cataloguing can be lonely, frustrating, and immensely difficult – even more so for collections of such scope. Over more than 800 pages, Buescher covers more than 1,200 manuscripts, many of them highly complex. One can only begin to imagine the scale of the challenge and congratulate Dr Buescher on his perseverance.

The collection as presented in these volumes spans a variety of genres and should inspire a wealth of research projects. The cataloguing itself follows concepts set out by Chandrabhal Tripathi in his 1975 work on South Asian manuscript studies. This allows Buescher to work around potential restrictions in modern-day library cataloguing standards, such as assumptions about manuscript materiality based on European manuscripts, while providing essential information in the form of catalogue number, physical condition, textual identification, and opening and closing citations from the contents.

The catalogue entries themselves are consistent and clearly the fruit of hard work. Helpfully, there are also cross-references to other catalogues, such as the monumental *New Catalogus Catalogorum*, still under production at the University of Madras, Chennai. Beyond these references, the notes on the physical descriptions, the